Orange Crush

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at https://archiveofourown.org/works/669591.

Rating:
Teen And Up Audiences

Archive Warning:
No Archive Warnings Apply

Category:
M/M

Fandom:
Everwood

Relationship:
Bright/Ephram

Characters:
Ephram Brown, Bright Abbott, Amy Abbott, Delia Brown, Andy Brown

Additional Tags:
First Kiss, Boys Kissing, Lyric Wheel

Language:
English

Stats:
Published: 2004-04-09 Words: 1,717 Chapters: 1/1

Orange Crush

by HYPERFocused

Summary

Bright couldn't help himself. He reached out and brushed his hand through the fine strands of Ephram's hair, one finger straying to lightly touch the side of Ephram's face.

Notes

Written for Danosulik's REM Title Challenge. The song quote is "Follow me, don't follow me". Big thanks to SuperGrover24 for the beta

They were sitting in the cab of Bright's truck when it happened for the first time. Bright couldn't help himself. He reached out and brushed his hand through the fine strands of Ephram's hair, one finger straying to lightly touch the side of Ephram's face. The sunlight was hitting it just right, bringing out the deep blue tint he'd put in it most recently. It looked incredible next to Ephram's paper-pale skin. Bright thought Ephram was pretty cool for daring to do that.

Bright's curls were boring old blond. The one time he'd tried changing that - he'd swiped a bottle of Sun-In from Amy - it had just turned an awful shade of green from the chlorine in the Everwood Country Club pool. His mom had to take him to her own beauty shop to get it dyed back to his normal color.

"There was fluff in it," he told him, when Ephram looked at him strangely. He couldn't very well tell Ephram that he loved Ephram's hair, much less how he felt about Ephram himself.

*

Instead, he made himself be a good friend, and gave Ephram what he hoped seemed like sound advice on how to work things out with Madison. Secretly, he wished they'd break up soon, though he didn't want her to hurt Ephram. Ephram was way too good for her. Ephram was way too good for him, too, come to think of it. And he thought of it, a lot.

*

He got his wish a few months later. He found Ephram walking his bike dejectedly towards school, and slowed his truck down. "Get in."

"It's all right. I'm not in a very good mood." He kept walking.

"You're always in a bad mood, Ephram. It comes with the territory. I'm used to it. Hell, I'd probably think something was wrong if you suddenly started smiling all the time." Oddly enough, that got an actual little smile out of Ephram, or at least an upward turn of the lips. Bright said, "Score!" in his head.

Ephram sighed, and lifted his bike, putting it in the back of the truck, like usual. "Jeez, Bright. Don't you ever clean this out? There's all sorts of crap back here."

"If you don't like it, you can always walk to school. Besides, you're not

sitting there. You're up front with me." Bright patted the seat next to him, reaching over to unlock the door.

"I was walking before. You're the one so set on the pleasure of my company." Ephram said, getting in.

Bright just shook his head. He waited for Ephram to belt himself in, then said, "So, Amy told me about you and Madison. I'm sorry. I wish I hadn't been right when I called it."

"Yeah, me too. Why couldn't this have been one of the many, many things you're wrong about?" Ephram slugged Bright on the arm, a very Brightish move, Bright thought. Maybe he'd rubbed off on Ephram more than he thought.

"Sorry, man. Even a broken clock is right twice a day. At least that's what my dad says."

"Uh, yeah. Your dad needs to read fewer Reader's Digests." Ephram groused. "I know it was the right thing to do, but I kind of wish we were still together. I miss her," Ephram confided. He opened his backpack on his lap, and pulled out the history notes he hadn't studied yet.

"You're better off without her, Ephram. She was treating you like a laptop." Bright said.

"Lapdog. And no, she wasn't. She was great. You could at least pretend to care. Or do you just like seeing me miserable?" Ephram really was in a foul mood. He was rotten company, but Bright didn't care. He was just glad to have Ephram around, especially since Madison was out of the picture.

"Of course I care, Ephram. I wanted you to be happy. I wanted Madison to treat you the way you deserved, but she didn't. God, she made me so mad. If I had you, I'd never be such a two faced jerk." Shit, he hadn't meant to say it like that. He backpedaled. "I mean, I wouldn't act like that with anyone I was supposed to be in love with."

"That's cool. You'd make somebody a good boyfriend," Ephram said.

Bright blushed, and said "Thanks, I think." Apparently Ephram hadn't taken the hint. That was probably a good thing. No matter what, Bright liked having Ephram for a friend. Unlike his jock buddies, Ephram had stuck by him when he wasn't scoring on the field. Luckily, there was no time for Ephram to ask questions. They were at

school already.

*

With Amy back at home, and Madison out of the picture, things were somewhat back to normal. Bright did his best to keep Ephram occupied. Extra concert tickets appeared, thanks to "one of Dad's patients". Bright developed a sudden interest in comic books, which he needed Ephram to explain. He even invited himself over to listen to Ephram play. These were all things he'd done fairly often before, but now he went all out. Finally, Delia asked if he "lived here, or still had a home of his own?"

"It's more fun here," he told her. "Do you want me to leave?" He looked at Ephram when he asked this.

"No!" Delia was cute. 'Ephram, don't make him leave." Bright knew she had a little crush on him. He wished he could tell her to put in a good word for him to her brother.

"He wasn't asking me, Deel." Ephram said, smiling.

*

Things went on like that for a while. The guys in the locker room teased him for always hanging out with "Mr. Depresso". His father suggested he might want to cultivate some healthier friendships. He didn't care.

It all came to a head a few weeks later. He and Ephram were in his truck, heading for the video store. Ephram was finally feeling better about things with Madison, and started talking about moving on. When he mentioned a new girl he'd met at a concert, Bright couldn't stand it. He shut Ephram up the way he'd been wanting to for almost a year.

"I don't think you should ask her out, no," he told Ephram.

"Why not?"

"She's not right for you", he said. Then he leaned in and kissed Ephram. Ephram pushed him away after a moment, but Bright could feel it. He was almost certain Ephram had kissed him back.

"What the fuck?" Ephram asked. "That's why you've been acting so weird all this time? Giving me relationship advice, going to my

concerts. Hell, you even offered to babysit!" Bright blushed, but wouldn't look up at him.

"That's just fucked up, Bright. Not that I should have expected anything else. After all, you're an Abbott. I knew your freak genes had to show up sometime."

Bright glared at him. "I'm a freak because I kissed you?"

"No, asshole. Because you've been acting so damn weird. Why didn't you just tell me you liked me? What did you think I was going to do, beat you up?"

"Because I didn't want you to react like this, and call me the creature from the blue lagoon," Bright said.

"Black."

"What?"

"The creature from the Blue Lagoon would be Brooke Shields. Who you don't resemble in the slightest, though come to think of it, you do sort of look like the guy, whatever his name was."

"That's all very interesting, E, but can we get back to the point? Why don't you like me?" Bright pressed. Ephram slid across the truck's seat, away from him, but Bright kept moving closer.

"Who said I didn't like you?" Ephram said, shaking off the older boy's arm from his shoulder. "Pull the fuck over."

Bright did, and Ephram yanked his bike from the back of the truck and rode off down the path that ran parallel to the school. Bright started up the truck again, following Ephram at the slowest pace possible. He ignored the cars honking behind them, and the yell of "work it out with your boyfriend later, asshole"

"Ephram! What the hell? Get back in here so we can talk about this."

"I'd rather walk, thank you."

"Ephram, I'm going to be driving behind you like this until you stop being an asshole and get in."

"Follow me, don't follow me. I don't give a shit."

"Dude, don't be pissed. I'm sorry. I promise I won't molest you. Just get

in, and I'll drive you home."

"I'm not pissed," Ephram said, but he sure sounded it.

"So if you don't not like me, and you aren't mad, then why are you walking in the rain when you could be in a nice warm car with me? "

"I don't know." Ephram spit, walking faster.

"You're being completely irrational."

"I'm allowed to. I'm a teenager. It's a law." Ephram was drenched. Bright pulled over, and opened the door for Ephram, who finally admitted he'd rather be warm than walk the rest of the way home in the downpour. "What makes you think I'd be okay with this?"

"I thought sooner or later you'd figure it out. How much I like you. Dude, I even started reading your magnet comics. That's got to count for something."

"Manga. Not Magnets. But yeah, that was pretty cool." He gave Bright a dirty look, like Bright had gotten him to admit something horrible. Like having a secret stash of Nsync CDs.

"So, are you? Okay with this? Or did I weird you out too much? We can pretend it didn't happen. Go back to being friends." Bright gripped the steering wheel tighter, and waited for Ephram to respond.

"Damn, I hate being wet." Ephram shook himself, scattering raindrops all over. "You know, I'm not sure I want to be friends with a guy who doesn't know what Manga is."

"Oh." Bright gripped the steering wheel tight enough to turn his knuckles white. So this was the end of everything. He hadn't realized he could hurt this badly since Colin.

Then Ephram turned to him, and put a hand on Bright's thigh. "But I think I'd be okay with that in a boyfriend."

When their lips met a second time, Bright was sure Ephram was kissing him back.

Please drop by the Archive and comment to let the creator know if you enjoyed their work!